

## **Course Contact Info**

English 4365, Usability Testing in Technical and Business Writing

Instructor: Dr. Kevin Garrison

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Office hours: M/W – 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

T/H – 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

\*Fridays and other times not listed by appointment if necessary with sufficient notice.

Section: 4365.010 – T/H, 11:00 pm – 12:15 pm, Room #205

## **Course Description**

Overview of usability testing (testing of products, product documentation, and web sites) procedures in technical and business writing, including the construction of a usability testing lab, practice at conducting usability tests through a service-learning project, and methods for reporting usability findings to clients.

Prerequisites: English 3351 or 3352.

## **Course Objectives**

- Objective #1: Develop skills in expressing yourself orally and in writing as it relates to usability issues.
- Objective #2: Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories of usability testing.
- Objective #3: Acquire skills in working with others as a member of a usability team.

## **Course Outcomes**

When you finish ENG 4365, you should be able to:

- Understand and implement the process of usability testing by:
  - Analyzing a client's situation: purpose, audience, context, constraints
  - Planning and managing individual and collaborative usability projects
  - Gathering, selecting, arranging, and interpreting data
  - Writing clearly and persuasively
  - Designing graphics and/or video
  - Presenting information orally

## CONNECT! Campus and Community Objective and Outcomes

This course contains a service-learning project, meaning that all students will complete a project for a community member while also receiving assignment credit. In addition to the above objectives and outcomes, you will also:

- Objective #4: Develop skills as a socially responsible citizen.

When you finish the assignment in ENG 4365, you should be able to:

- Respond to a community need
- Reflect on the relevance of engaging with other cultural groups and articulate the relevance of a service-learning project for your life.

### Assignments

Section	Points	Individual Deliverable	Group Deliverable
Section 1	15%	Midterm Exam	
Section 2	15%	Individual Usability Test	
Section 2	10%		Test Plan Proposal
Section 3	10%	Informal Presentation of Article	
Section 4	15%		Report of Findings
Section 5	10%		Presentation to Client
	5%		Group Participation Assessment
	10%	Quizzes	
	10%	Final Exam	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		

### Materials for this Class

- *Handbook of Usability Testing*, Rubin and Chisnell, 2<sup>th</sup> ed. (available from [Amazon](#) as paperback or as a Kindle book).
- Access to a computer which has an Internet connection, MS Office 2010, Adobe Acrobat Reader, and email access.
- A way to store files

### Covenant Not to Compete

While taking the course English 4365: Usability Testing for Technical and Business Writing, or while employed or volunteering at the usability lab at Angelo State University, students agree not to compete with any businesses in Tom Green County.

For purposes of this covenant not to compete, competition is defined as soliciting or accepting

employment by, or rendering professional services to, any person or organization that is or was in the business of usability testing documents, websites, or products.

### **Classroom Behaviors**

- You will adhere to the standards set in the [ASU Student Handbook](#).
- Adhere to standards of common courtesy (i.e. turn off cell phones, no reading newspapers in class, no studying for tests during class time). If your actions are disruptive or disrespectful, then I will ask you to stop and/or leave.
- As I will demonstrate and discuss on the first day of class, I have a high-frequency hearing impairment. While this should not detract from your learning experience, it means that you will engage with audience awareness.
  - Get my attention if you want to speak - I will never know who is talking unless I have a visual cue alerting me to who is speaking.
  - Speak at a volume that everyone in the class can hear - if you mumble or speak quietly, you will have to repeat yourself a number of times.
  - Look at the person you are addressing - I read lips, so don't cover your mouth or look at your shoelaces or chew on your pen.

### **Email Policy**

I will only check my emails during regular business hours, so if you email me over the weekend, do not expect a reply until the following Monday. To insure that I reply quickly to student emails, I expect the following:

- A clear subject line, including the course number "4365"
- A clear message
- Proper salutation, including my name and your name

### **Grading Policy**

Grades on assignments will be determined according to the following criteria:

- **A (90-99%)** The document is superior. It exceeds all the objectives of the assignment. The information is ethical, sophisticated, thorough, and ideally suited for the audience. The style is clear and appropriate to the subject, purpose, and audience. The organization and design of the document make the information understandable, accessible, and usable. The mechanics and grammar are correct.
- **B (80-89%)** The document is good. It meets the objectives of the assignment, but requires minor improvements or reveals easily correctable errors in organization, style, design, grammar, or mechanics.
- **C (70-79%)** The document is adequate. It omits useful information or requires significant improvement in organization, style, design, grammar, or mechanics. It may be formally correct but superficial in its discussion.
- **D (60-69%)** The document is disappointing. It meets some of the objectives of the assignment but ignores others; the discussion is inadequately developed, omits important

information, or displays numerous or major errors in organization, style, design, grammar, or mechanics.

- **F (0-59%)** The document is unsatisfactory. It omits critical information, does something other than the assignment required, or displays major or excessive errors in organization, style, design, grammar, or mechanics.

*Clarifications* – If students would like clarification about assignment grades, I always enjoy discussing my comments and your work. Such serves as a learning experience for both of us - me to see your perspective, you to see mine. If you want to talk about my comments, then you can stop by anytime during my normal office hours. If you want to discuss the grade, I do expect a few basic things: 1) re-read the grading policy, 2) schedule a time to meet in my office, 3) be prepared to discuss my comments (and if possible come with detailed notes and a clear understanding of what I stated), 4) be ready to enter into a dialogic exchange where you attempt to understand my perspective and I attempt to understand your perspective. I will not discuss your grades via email since this would violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

*Response Time* – All major assignments are usually graded within two weeks of submission (or prior to the next major assignment).

*Late Penalties* – Assignments (both major assignments and homework assignments) will be assessed a penalty of 10% if turned in after the submission time and 10% more for each additional day late. This includes weekends and holidays.

*Incompletes* – I will not give a grade of “I” (an incomplete) in this course.

*Use* – I reserve the right to use any of your assignments as samples for future courses.

## **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism is using someone else's words, ideas, or images and not giving them credit through the use of an accepted citation style. In essence, it is the academic form of "shoplifting." The way to avoid plagiarism is to cite the information properly, using a citation style such as MLA or APA. Because this class will ask for students to turn in non-traditional assignments, it is likely that the rules for citation will be blurred. See me if you have even the slightest doubt about what is correct and appropriate. If you are unfamiliar with how to cite sources on traditional assignments, then you have a number of options:

- See <http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf>
- See me
- Visit the [ASU Writing Center](#) for Instruction
- Purchase an [MLA](#) or [APA](#) Handbook
- Use online resources such as Purdue's Website on [MLA Guidelines](#)
- Read a detailed explanation of [Plagiarism](#)

What happens if you are caught plagiarizing? You will receive an automatic "0" on the assignment with an opportunity to revise for half-credit. We will sit down in my office, discuss the rules of citation, and make sure that it won't happen again.

If you are caught plagiarizing a second time, you will fail the course, and I will inform the department head, academic dean, and the Executive Director of Student Life for potential further disciplinary action.

## **Attendance Policy**

There are two types of absences:

- Unexcused - you may miss two classes this semester, with no questions asked.
- Excused - after those two unexcused absences, the only absences that will be accepted are 1) notes from your doctor, 2) documentation proving a death in the family, 3) observance of a religious holiday, or 4) a university sanctioned event.

After you miss two classes, you will lose 5% of your overall grade for each day missed. Once you miss 7 total classes, you will receive an "F" for the course.

A few minutes after class begins, I will take attendance by passing around a sheet to sign. If you are not there when attendance is taken, then it is your responsibility to sign the sheet prior to leaving. Two tardies equal one absence.

If you miss class, work should be made up by contacting peers to find out what was missed.

## **Accommodations**

Any student with a disability who may require special arrangements to meet course requirements must present to me the appropriate documentation as soon as possible. There is no requirement that accommodations be made prior to completion of this standard university procedure. Contact Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center for more information.

Any student who misses class due to observance of a religious holiday should consult with me prior to the missed class period.

## **Course Support**

- [Information Technology \(IT\)](#) for help with email, Blackboard, Ramport
- [Library](#) for help with conducting research
- [English Language Learners' Institute](#) for English as Second Language (ESL) students
- [Career Development](#) for students wanting help with resumes, job applications, etc...
- [SMART](#) for academic success and tutoring
- [Disability Accommodations](#) for disabled and impaired students

## Tentative Schedule

Day	Section	Topic
14-Jan	INTRODUCTION	Introducing the Course and it's Concepts and Introducing Ourselves
16-Jan	SECTION 1	What is Usability? The Psychology of Users and the "Ugly Baby"
21-Jan		Types of User-Centered Designed Tests
23-Jan		Methodology of Usability Testing
28-Jan		When to Test and Types of Data to Collect and Benchmarks to Set
30-Jan		Workshop: Planning a Test
4-Feb		Midterm Review
6-Feb		Midterm Exam
11-Feb	SECTION 2	Workshop: Practice with the Eyetracker Introducing the Individual Test Assignment
13-Feb		Prepping for the Test: Moderators
18-Feb		Prepping for the Test: Test Materials (Forms); Test Plan Proposal
20-Feb		Prepping for the Test: Usability Labs and the Environment
25-Feb		Prepping for the Test: User Profiles and Recruitment; Choosing Groups/Clients
27-Feb		The Test Plan Proposal Assignment
4-Mar		SECTION 3
6-Mar	Why Test? Theory #2: Usability as Technological Efficiency (Anti-Frustration); Article Presentation	
11-Mar	SPRING BREAK	
13-Mar	SPRING BREAK	
18-Mar	Article Presentations on Best Practices; Day 1	
20-Mar	Article Presentations on Best Practices; Day 2	
25-Mar	Guest Presentation by Joe Erickson on Web Usability Practices	
27-Mar	SECTION 4	Morae Demonstration
1-Apr		Writing the Report; Analyzing other usability reports
3-Apr		Video Editing Essentials; Cropping, Editing, and Publishing Files in MovieMaker
8-Apr		Analyzing Data: Qualitative Data
10-Apr		Analyzing Data: Quantitative Data
15-Apr		Workshop on Reports and Video
17-Apr		Workshop on Reports and Video
22-Apr	SECTION 5	Final Exam Review, Course Evaluations, and Group Evaluations
24-Apr		In-Office Reviews of Rough Drafts of Video and Reports; NO CLASS
29-Apr		PRESENTATIONS TO CLIENTS
1-May		PRESENTATIONS TO CLIENTS
6-May		Final Exam @ 10:30-12:30